

When it comes to parties, this one was nothing '2 Die 4'



LEFT OF CENTER
JILL HAMILTON

After two years as a music journalist, I finally got to go to one of those big deal major label record release parties. And I'm going to tell you what it was like.

As it turned out, my being invited had nothing to do with being a music writer — some friends from Tower Records got the invite and let me tag along. You get your perks when you can.

Driving to the event, the Tower folks told about record parties of the past — the generous spreads of food, hanging out with Iggy Pop, eating lunch with Queen's Brian

May and chatting with David Bowie.

The featured guests at this particular party were not quite as illustrious as that. In fact, I had never heard of them. It was an English outfit who goes by the name of 2 Die 4 (that's "To Die For" in standard English).

The event was held in a sports and bar complex in Mount Clemens. It was one of those places with miniature golf, bungee jumping, go-carts and several bars, in case you overexert yourself playing too many video games.

We went upstairs to the private bar they had rented for the occasion and stood around uncomfortably for a few minutes while we worked out a game plan.

Deciding that eating dinner would be a good thing to do, we

checked out the buffet table and found a generous spread of Cheetos, potato chips and, presumably the main course, cheese and crackers.

Overhead, several video screens were playing 2 Die 4's video over and over again. The video featured the band bungee jumping in some parts of the song and playing their instruments in other parts. It would have been a good introduction to the band except the sound was turned off and what you could hear instead was a DJ loudly playing Bob Seger tunes. To this day, I still have no idea what 2 Die 4 actually sounds like.

While enjoying some Cheetos I glanced around the room looking for someone who might be a musician. No one had the telltale signs of long hair or leather clothing. I did notice that I didn't know anyone. It was

sort of like being at a high school party at somebody else's high school.

Eventually, a record guy came up to us. The stereotype is that record company folks are a strange lot — I believe the slang term for them is "record company weasels." This guy did nothing to dispel the stereotype.

In a misguided attempt to appear "with it" and sexy, he wore a pair of painfully tight-looking pants. He kept slapping the Tower people on the back and was the type of guy who calls everyone "haha."

While talking, he scanned the room for better people to talk to and, eventually, this direct descendant of Herb Tarlick found some — thankfully — and left to "mingle."

Then, the moment we'd been waiting for arrived. The members of

2 Die 4 set themselves up at a table to meet their public. Their public dutifully formed a long line to chat with the guys and get their autographs.

Autograph seekers got a chance to establish deep, personal rapport with the band in the 30 seconds it took to sign "Best Wishes, Fred" or "Love Ya Emily."

The band members broke the conversational ice with questions along the lines of "How ya doing?" Most of the fans were "fine."

I went and played a game of pool, because — and this may be the biggest mistake of my life — I seriously doubted the future value of an autographed 2 Die 4 photo.

After the line had ended, the band members stood up and sort of huddled together for a while. They looked young and uncomfortable.

Everyone eventually gathered for photo shoots. The way it worked was the staff of a record store would go stand by the band, wrap their arms around them chummily, smile, then be whisked away after the shot. I got in the Tower shot, and now own a picture of myself appearing to be pals with the band.

Finally, the party broke up. We went and played miniature golf.

The wisdom behind these type of parties is that once you have personal contact with the band, you will follow their career eagerly and give them good word of mouth. Perhaps it's true. If I ever do see their bungee-jumping video on MTV, maybe I will talk up the band, and casually mention my "friendship" with them, showing the photo for evidence.

I hope I won't.

'Masquerade' has twists, surprises and some romance



PASS THE POPCORN
LIANNE ROGERS

You get a good idea about the characters in their first scenes. As the young woman, Meg Tilly is seen

Mix a rather shy, rather rich girl with a creepy stepfather and a poor but very handsome guy who sails yachts for the wealthy and competitive and you kind of have the basis for the effective little film "Masquerade."

Naturally, Tilly and Lowe connect. It's a relationship that develops slowly and apparently as a natural progression. Both are good at developing an emotional connection between the pair, if not necessarily a strong physical chemistry.

Also summering in the Hamp-

tons is the woman's stepfather, the most recent of her late mother's string of husbands. Played by John Glover, this guy is the type of obnoxious drunken lout who is the last to leave any party or bar. Due to some inheritance stipulations, Tilly is unable to rid herself of this other legacy from her recently deceased mother. Tilly wants to be rid of him and he'd like her gone, leaving him to inherit millions.

The only truly nice guy around seems to be a clean-scrubbed local cop, played by Doug Savant, who has been carrying a torch for Tilly since they were kids. He tries hard

with her but she isn't interested. When she learns he became a police officer and didn't go to law school, she minimizes him completely with a look.

This a story of the rich and idle, who live in a society where they don't need to lock the doors on their oceanfront 100-room "cottages" and have the local police checking the guest list for admittance into private parties. These are people who give expensive sports cars as birthday presents.

It's also about the working people who also live in the town and the different set of standards by which

the wealthy live. It's about what people will do when motivated by greed for money or sex or love.

The plot has plenty of twists and some surprises, some romance and not a lot of overt violence. People aren't always what they seem to be and don't always do what is expected. This isn't one of those thrillers that insulate your intelligence by giving you a false sense, a moment of relief and then has the killer hop out of the closet. The people that seem to be running the show aren't necessarily in control.

Tilly's acting often strikes me as

unfocused, although that quality works rather well for this character. Lowe is good as the boyfriend, possibly sincere or maybe a romantic mercenary. Despite the involvement of the stepfather, Savant as the unrequited police officer really makes up the third piece of the story's triangle.

Another nice thing about this film is that when the end comes, you understand what has happened. The villain doesn't helpfully explain it for you.

"Masquerade" is available on video cassette at local video stores.

Screen from page 8A

"Monty Python and the Holy Grail" (Britain — 1974), 7:30 p.m. Aug. 5 and 9:25 p.m. Aug. 6. The funniest feature from the British comedy troupe takes on the medieval crusades with typically wild results.

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"Alexander's Ragtime Band" (USA — 1938). Tyrone Power, Alice Faye and Don Ameche star in this big-scale musical, set around the turn of the century. Songs, aside from the title tune, include "Now It

Can Be Told," "My Walking Stick" and "I'm Marching Along with Time."

"Broken Arrow" (USA — 1950). One of a handful of fascinating westerns James Stewart made in the 1950s. He plays an ex-soldier who joins with Chief Cochise (Jeff Chandler) to seek an accord between feuding Indians and whites. Directed by Delmer Daves.

"Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" (USA — 1966). When college professor Richard Burton and wife Elizabeth Taylor invite a young couple over for dinner, the conversation turns incredibly bitter. A classic adult comedy based on a play by Edward Albee and directed by Mike Nichols.

— John Monaghan

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